

NEWS RELEASE

Family, Infant and Preschool Program Receives \$1.9 million Early Head Start Expansion Grant

The Family, Infant and Preschool Program (FIPP) of the J. Iverson Riddle Developmental Center has received a \$1.9 million Early Head Start (EHS) Expansion Grant from the Administration for Children and Families Office of Head Start in Washington, D.C. This funding will allow FIPP to expand its nationally recognized Early Head Start Program in Alexander County to Burke and Caldwell Counties.

“This federal grant will enable us to serve an additional 140 children and their families in both home and center-based settings,” shared M’Lisa Shelden, Ph.D., Director of the Family, Infant and Preschool Program. FIPP will add a classroom to the current program in Alexander County bringing the total number of children and families served to 68. In Burke County, services will be provided to 44 children and their families through a home-visitation component and 32 children will be served in classrooms spread throughout the county. Thirty-two children and their families will receive home-visitation in Caldwell County and three classrooms serving 24 children will be added to the current Caldwell County Family Resource Center at 609 Harper Avenue in Lenoir. A total of 32 new jobs will be created as a result of this funding.

“The purpose of Early Head Start is to promote healthy prenatal outcomes for pregnant women, to enhance the development of very young children, and to promote healthy family functioning for low-income families with infants and toddlers from

birth to three years of age and women who are pregnant. This funding will enable us to reach families who until now have previously been unserved,” reported Sarah Sexton, FIPP EHS Program Director. At least 10% of children served by EHS also have some type of developmental disability. For these children, FIPP will provide occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech-language pathology, special education, psychology, and nursing services. In addition to the \$1.9 million in annual funding, FIPP will receive \$1.4 million in start-up funds to be used to prepare the classrooms and family resource centers, construct playgrounds, and purchase materials. Enrollment is currently underway. The Family Resource Center in Alexander County is already open at 401 East Main Street in Taylorsville. The Family Resource Centers in Burke and Caldwell County will open in January, 2010 and the target date for the home visitation component to begin in Burke and Caldwell Counties is also January, 2010. The classrooms in all three counties will begin opening in Spring, 2010. “This is a huge resource for Alexander, Burke, and Caldwell Counties and we are so pleased to be a part of it,” said Dr. Shelden. For more information or to enroll, contact Sarah Sexton at (828) 433-2661.